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## STUDENT REPORT

HISTORIC BATTLE ANALYSIS:

AZOV 1695-1696

MAJOR RICHARD M. BEREIT

84-0220

*"insights into tomorrow"*

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Submitted to the faculty in partial fulfillment of  
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20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) Describes the historic Russian/Turkish battles of Azov in 1695 and 1696. It contrasts the battles and discusses the changes that were made in Russian preparation after their defeat in 1695 to achieve the victory in 1696. Project then uses the principles of war as described in AFM 1-1 to analyze the battles from the Russian and Turkish point of view. The last section of the project provides questions for use in a guided discussion of the battles.		

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## PREFACE

1. This historic battle analysis focuses attention on the Russian/Turkish battles for the fortress of Azov in 1695 and 1696. Additionally, it uses this battle to discuss and illustrate the principles of war described in AFM 1-1. The specific format requirements are established in EDCJ letter dated 14 September 1983. A waiver to length requirement in Part I was given by Major Dorrough since the battle was relatively obscure and needed some additional background information. The tasking letter is Appendix D of this paper.

2. The analysis of the battle focuses greater attention to the Russian side than the Turkish side. This is due primarily to the lack of research material written from the Turkish point of view. The Air University Library has a wealth of Russian history books but only a few dealing with this period of Turkish history. Additionally, the battle of Azov was considered as only a minor loss for the Turks. The Russians, however, wrote extensively about the battle because it was a landmark for innovative military land and sea forces. While the overall emphasis is weighted toward the Russian point of view, enough information is presented concerning Turkish actions to allow a useful comparison of combatants and their actions.

3. I wish to acknowledge the special contribution of Dr. Kenneth Whiting, AU/CADRE, for locating the Soviet Military Encyclopedia in the Air University Library and translating from Russian the portion of the book that concerned the Azov Campaigns (bibliography reference 19).

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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## INTRODUCTION

*Every potentate who has only ground forces has but one hand; yet whoever has a navy too, has both hands.*

--Tsar Peter the Great

Father of the Russian Navy (6:13)

In 1695, Russia, led by Tsar Peter the Great, began a land battle against the city of Azov on the Don River. This first campaign was a dismal failure owing to numerous errors and shortcomings made by the Russian leaders and soldiers. The next spring Peter returned to Azov and waged a successful land battle using naval support forces. These campaigns were the first real combat for young Tsar Peter. Lessons learned from these battles shaped Peter's future military strategy. Later tsars and commissars followed Peter's example in the way he deployed and employed Russian land and naval forces. The battle of Azov marked the turning point in relative military strength between Turkey and Russia. Russia grew stronger in influence and control of the Black Sea, while Turkey waned. Azov also marked Russia's first use of naval power. In the five winter months between the campaign of 1695 and 1696, Peter commanded the construction of a large ocean-capable fleet of warships as well as a thousand support barges and boats. This naval force assured victory in the 1696 campaign and shaped Peter's future strategies. While this victory, Peter's first, receives less historical coverage (than Poltava, for instance), it is one of the most significant battles for Peter and for the development of the Russian

military--especially the navy. The battles demonstrate traditional as well as innovative use of military force. Finally, the Azov campaigns provide clear examples of the principles of war that were ignored or employed by the Turkish and Russian forces. The description of the Azov campaigns that follows acquaints the reader with a significant period of Russian history and gives an understanding of some of the forces and events that have shaped modern Russia.

Part I begins with a brief review of the historical, political, and geographic background. This part includes a summary of the campaign objectives, followed by a description of the 1695 battle, the between campaign winter preparations, and the 1696 battle. Part I concludes with a summary of lessons learned.

Part II lists the principles of war, as written in AFM 1-1, and analyzes the application or exclusion of the principles during the battle of Azov.

Part III contains questions for discussion. It provides a series of questions with recommended answers to be used in leading a guided discussion in seminar format.

## PART I

### BATTLE DESCRIPTION

Since this battle is not a modern or familiar one, a brief overview of the historical, political, and geographical background is provided to establish the purpose of the Azov battles and their relative significance in Russian history.

#### Historical Background

In 1695 Peter the Great desired to lead Russia toward modernization and increased prominence in European affairs. This emergence was feared by the powers of Western Europe. Because of Russia's geographic position and her own Orthodox Church, she had few relations or ties with other European nations. Yet, because of her sheer size and often bellicose spirit, she was feared as a dormant giant. For almost four centuries Western Europe had watched the eastern hordes (principally Mongols) invade and sack Russia. Even in 1695 Russia experienced continuing attacks on its southern territories from the Tatars and was kept from the Black Sea by the ships of the Ottoman Sultan. Every summer the Tatar Khan raided the Ukraine. In 1692 12,000 Tatar cavalry attacked the Russian city of Niemrov and carried off 2,000 captives for sale in the Ottoman slave market. Over the next year a total of 15,000 Russians were carried away from the Russian steppes and sold in the slave market. Additionally, Tatars demanded a yearly payment of tribute from the

Russians (15:37). During the reign of Peter's father, Prince Vasily Golitsyn had conducted disastrous and unsuccessful campaigns against the Turks (15:38). There seemed to be no end of Turkish insults to Russia. Militarily, Russia was bankrupt. She had not experienced a military victory in the 60 years prior to Peter's reign (15:147). The Turks captured the fortress of Azov in 1475 and had cut all commerce down the Don River since that time (20:67). From 1677 to 1681 Russia fought its first war with Turkey. At the Treaty of Radzin, Russia was allowed limited access to the Black Sea. By 1689, however, Turkey had expanded its fleet and had completely eliminated Russian ships from the Black Sea (17:2). After years of insult and restriction of commerce Russia was seeking a major reversal on her southern border. She needed to control Azov and build a fleet to open Black Sea access.

#### Political Background

In 1686 Russia joined an alliance with Poland and Austria. This alliance was formed to combat the Ottoman Empire in the south and the Swedish kingdom in the north (8:83). By 1690 the Poles and the Austrians felt that Russia was not fulfilling its treaty responsibilities in fighting the Turks, since the last campaigns had been those under Golitsyn in 1687. Poland's King Jon Sobieski was threatening to sign a separate peace treaty with Turkey that ignored Russian claims and interests (15:37). This fear, as well as the legitimate Turkish threat, hastened Peter's preparations for a renewed war with the Sultan.

Additionally, the Ukranian and Don Cossack's loyalty to Moscow fluctuated depending on their perception of Moscow's willingness to assist in repulsing the continual Turkish sorties into their homeland.

Peter knew that Cossack loyalty was at an ebb. Renewed action against the Turks was required to secure Cossack loyalty (8:83).

Two additional political factors influenced 17th century Russia. First, Russians believed that the Orthodox Church was the most pure among the Christian churches. Consequently, the Turkish attacks were not merely those of one nation against another, but rather, the attacks of the Moslem infidels against a Holy Russian Church (8:22,23). Peter reflected this attitude in a letter written before the 1695 campaign. In his early optimism he wrote, "Surely the Children of Hell (Turks) shall not overcome us!" (7:57).

Finally, due to the unusual double monarchy arrangement that existed, Peter was free to move about the country as a soldier and prepare the battle. In 1682, with the death of Tsar Alexi, Peter and his older half brother Ivan were both placed on the throne. Ivan, though older, was physically and mentally feeble. Peter was strong and intelligent. The Russian boyars (bureaucrats) crowned them both, to prevent a strong regent from ruling in Ivan's name, due to his mental inabilities. This dual throne was a boon to Peter. He enjoyed the outdoors and from an early age shared exceptional prowess in command and military affairs. Therefore, from his birth in 1672 until the death of Ivan in 1696, Peter trained in military disciplines including shipbuilding and siege engineering. While Ivan sat on the throne and attended matters of state, Peter began to prepare himself and the forces which would change the direction of Russian history (13:27,28).

### Geographic Background

The fortress of Azov lay 15 miles upstream from the mouth of the River Don. It was located on the south bank of the southernmost branch of the river (see map). One mile above the city on either side of the river were fortified towers with steel chains stretched between them. Azov with its towers cut off Russian access to the Black Sea via the Don. This Turkish fort, along with those on the Dnieper, denied Russian commerce on the Black Sea (20:67). Peter desired commerce with the west (13:32). Sweden controlled the Baltic and Turkey controlled the Black Sea as well as the Turkish Straits. Trade with both east and west could be initiated via the Don and the Black Sea, but Azov had to be secured first (8:83).

In his writings shortly before his death, Peter stated, "Russian territory must be expanded towards the North along the Baltic and also towards the south along the Black Sea. We must move as near as possible to Constantinople and India. Whoever governs these will be the true sovereign of the world (5:46)." Seizing Azov was to be the first step toward the world influence he desired.

### Objectives

Peter's objectives at Azov were numerous. He sought to:

1. Fulfill alliance obligations by defeating the Turks in an important battle. This action would ensure consideration of Russian interests in any peace treaty with the Turks.
2. Establish a port with access to eastern and western markets.
3. Challenge Turkish influence and control in the Black Sea.

4. Exercise and prove the new "modern" regiments Peter had been developing after the European model.

5. Demonstrate the power of the Tsar to his opponents at home and to his allies and enemies abroad.

The Turkish Sultan's objectives were to:

1. Maintain absolute control of the northern approaches to the Black Sea.
2. Repulse the Russian force sent at Azov.
3. Ensure favorable terms of peace based on defeat of the Russian Army.

#### The 1695 Campaign

*At Kozhukhovo we jested, now we are going to play the real game at Azov (15:138).*

From age 2 to age 23 Peter "played" at war. His European tutors taught him the art of shipbuilding and modern land warfare including artillery and siege engineering. In two towns near Moscow Peter had developed elite regiments, the Preobrazhenski and the Senenovski (deriving names from the towns) (18:240). These regiments were trained and equipped in the European style. They were professionals who had developed their ability in mock battles such as the Kozhukhovo "siege." Azov was to be the first real test of Peter's new army. Accompanying these regiments were the Streltsy. These were also professional soldiers who guarded Moscow and the Tsar. These troops, however, were unreliable in battles away from Moscow. On 21 February 1695 the first council of war met in Moscow to formulate plans and begin deployment. In the spring two major thrusts were to penetrate along the Don and Dnieper

Rivers to the Black Sea. General Boris P. Sheremetev with 120,000 peasant recruits and a force of Zaporozhsky Cossacks led by their own flamboyant Mazeppa would proceed to the outlet of the Dnieper River (8:83). Their secondary objective was to take the Turkish forts of Ochakov and Kazikerman as well as three other small forts which defended the river mouth (15:138). Their primary objective, however, was to occupy the Tatar cavalry near the Dnieper so that Azov could be besieged relatively free of cavalry harassment.

The second thrust was to attack Azov. The Scottish General Patrick Gordon left Moscow in early March with one of the elite regiments and traveled overland to Azov. He was joined in route by 5,000 Don Cossack cavalry. This division accounted for 9,500 men and 53 cannon. Gordon's forces reached Azov on 27 March and began to dig siege fortifications (19:125). The other two armies of approximately 10,000 men each were assigned to Swiss General F. Lefort and Russian General A. M. Golovin. These armies were composed of Peter's elite regiments as well as the Streltsy (Moscow guard). In May Peter moved this force by water down the Moskua, Oka, and Volga rivers. At Volgograd boats and armaments were dragged overland to the Don River. The entire force arrived at Azov on 29 June. The combined commands of Gordon, Lefort, and Golovin totalled 31,000 soldiers. No supreme commander was appointed. Decisions were to be made by the three generals in council with Tsar Peter (3:298). Peter, however, spent his energies serving as an ordinary artillery officer, leaving his generals to argue with one another. This lack of a supreme commander was disastrous.



General Gordon was appointed quartermaster but found resupply exceedingly difficult (3:297). The towers and chains upstream from Azov prevented the resupply barges from reaching the Russian forces. The barges were therefore unloaded upstream and the material was transported overland to the Russian forces. These wagon convoys were constantly attacked by sorties from the Turks inside the Azov fortress (15:139). Conquering the towers, therefore, became the first objective. On 7 July the Russian cannons opened fire on the towers and on Azov. The barrage against the fort lasted 14 weeks (15:139). By 20 July, one of the towers fell to a Cossack attack. The second finally capitulated in early August. With the towers under Russian control and the barrier chains removed, supplies could be transported directly by barge to the Russian forces (8:84). Full attention was next directed to Azov itself. It had been nearly surrounded in June with siege works. Unfortunately, the Russian forces were not adequate to completely encircle the city. Additionally, the Don River and the Sea of Azov were controlled by the Turkish fleet. Consequently, the Turks were able to continuously resupply the Azov defenders. Their first Turkish resupply mission arrived and unloaded on 20 July. This seaborne resupply continued throughout the following months. Because of this, the Turkish defenders who never numbered more than 15,000 were able to hold off the 31,000 attackers (15:140).

In early July, the Turks launched a counterattack. This counterattack was eventually repulsed by Gordon's division. The Turks and Russians suffered heavy losses, but the Turks soon received reinforcements (3:298). This bad field situation for the Russians grew worse. General Golovin and Lefort were jealous of General Gordon. They defeated

his proposals in council and would not support him in battle. Austrian mine engineers Timmerman and Wiede were sent to inspect the mines that were to blow up portions of the fortress walls. These two, as well as Gordon, stated the charges were incorrectly prepared. Lefort and Golovin encouraged Peter to overrule, which he did. When the fuses were lit, the mines blew up in the wrong direction and killed many Russians (7:58). The Streltsy also added to the confusion. They refused to follow orders given by European officers. (Lefort was Swiss and Gordon was Scottish (15:139).) The ultimate tragedy occurred at the end of July when the Dutch engineer Jacob Jensen defected to the Turks. Jensen was a close friend and confidante of Peter's. He related the entire Russian battle plan to the Pasha of Azov. This report included a complete review of strong and weak points in the Russian siege works. He also explained that the best time to attack was after the noonday meal, when most Russians napped for a few hours (8:84). The next day, after the noon meal, the Pasha launched sorties against the weakest points in the siege walls. A three-hour battle raged which was finally repulsed by General Gordon and his army. Russian losses included 400 dead and 600 wounded. Many of the siege works were destroyed (15:140). On 15 August Peter, after receiving counsel from Lefort and Golovin, ordered a frontal assault on the fortress. General Gordon protested but was overruled. Russian attackers were slaughtered as they crossed the open ground and advanced to the walls. The attack was repulsed and cost Peter 1,500 soldiers from his elite regiments. The horrors and frustrations of real war were becoming evident to the young Tsar. On 25 September Peter commanded another frontal attack on the walls. This too was repulsed.

Two days later Peter ordered a retreat to Moscow (19:125). Three thousand men were left at Azov to maintain control of the watchtowers. The rest began a 7-week retreat across the steppes. During the retreat Tatar cavalry continually harassed the army. An entire Russian regiment with commanding officer was killed during the retreat (7:58). On 2 December the bedraggled army arrived in Moscow. Azov remained firmly in Turkish control. Sheremetev provided the only good news. His campaign on the Dnieper had been a complete success. He had captured all of the Turkish outposts and built a new one on the island of Tavan. His forces had also captured many small Turkish boats (13:32). The Cossacks also were pleased with the attention Moscow had shown for their plight.

#### The Winter Preparations

The first campaign had failed for three principal reasons: (1) There was no supreme commander. The divided command was chaotic. (2) The Turks were able to resupply by sea. This made the siege futile. (3) The siege walls, mining, and artillery were ineffective. More professionals were required.

Peter began immediately to correct these errors and prepare for a renewed campaign against Azov. He appointed the Russian nobleman A. S. Shein as supreme commander. All orders, therefore, would originate with a Russian officer. This solved the Streltsy loyalty issue (7:61). Of even greater importance, Peter ordered the construction of a seagoing fleet. The fleet was constructed in the five winter months at Voronezh on the Don. The magnitude of this feat defies comprehension. In the middle of winter, 28,000 conscripted laborers with Dutch and Venetian shipwrights constructed and armed 2 ships of the line, 4 fireboats, 23

galleys, and over 1,300 barges and transport vessels (8:86). The larger ships were built in Moscow, hauled in pieces on sleds overland and assembled at Voronezh. Finally, Peter requested and received European land and sea warfare experts. These included artillery and mine specialists from Austria and Denmark, artillery and shipwrights from Holland, and an admiral from Venice (12:104). During these winter months Peter developed elaborate naval regulations as well as signal and alarms for control of the fleet while underway. He also established a new force of 4,000 marines for use in boarding skirmishes (15:144). These actions were the genesis of the Russian navy and marines. On 29 January Ivan, Peter's brother and co-tsar, died. Peter now was the sole ruler of Russia (8:87).

#### The 1696 Campaign

*Surprise is the most essential factor of victory. . . nothing makes a leader greater than to guess the decisions of the enemy . . . to recognize, to grasp the situation and take advantage of it as it arises--new and sudden things catch armies by surprise!* --Nicolo Machiavelli (14:--)

Nothing could have surprised the Turks at Azov more than to see an entire Russian fleet arrive at the mouth of the Don in the spring of 1696. The fleet was commanded by Lefort--now promoted to Admiral. He was assisted by Venetian Vice Admiral Lima and French Rear Admiral L'osier. Peter captained the galley Principium (20:71). On 3 May, the first eight ships weighed anchor at Voronezh and began their journey to Azov. Thereafter, another squadron of eight ships left every week. By the end of May the entire fleet had reached the twin towers of Novosergievsk. On 28 May the Cossacks were dispatched to reconnoiter the mouth of the river. They returned a report of "Two Turkish ships anchored

at the mouth of the river." Peter sent a force of 9 galleys and 800 Cossacks in smaller boats to attack the Turks. To their great surprise they encountered 40 Turkish ships instead of 2! Several of the Russian galleys had run aground enroute and Peter cancelled the attack. That night, the Cossacks in their small leather boats rowed up beside the Turkish fleet. In a surprise skirmish they captured 10 Turkish vessels. The remaining vessels, fearing a full assault from the Russian fleet, weighed anchor and fled to the open water in the Sea of Azov. The fleeing ships were the last to resupply Azov (15:144,145). Peter sailed his entire fleet to the mouth of the Don on 2 June and positioned all of the galleys to thwart Turkish resupply. On 10 June a Turkish soldier who had been captured revealed that a fleet of "50 Turkish ships had been heading toward Azov (8:80)." A few days later a much smaller fleet was sighted which fled at the sight of the Russian galleys.

On either side of the mouth of the river the Russians had quickly erected two forts and positioned marines there with a battery of cannon. On 14 June the Turks attacked these forts. Again, at first sight of the Russian fleet, the Turks fled. In July one additional Turkish landing was repulsed by the Russian fleet. The battle for sea and river control was complete (15:145).

By 10 June the army had taken up their positions around Azov. Apparently, the Turkish defenders did not expect the Russians to return after their defeat in 1695. They had left Russian siege works intact from the year before. The Russian battle plan was unchanged. Sheremetev with 70,000 soldiers proceeded to the Dnieper to engage and delay the Tatar cavalry (19:165). General Shein was to surround Azov and bombard

it until it surrendered. His forces consisted of 46,000 Russian peasant soldiers and Peter's elite regiments, 15,000 Ukrainian Cossacks, Don Cossacks, and 3,000 Kalmuk cavalry. The total force was over 75,000. This was more than twice that fielded in 1695 (8:87). By the end of June the city was surrounded with siege fortifications and cut off from Turkish fleet support. A call for Turkish surrender on 20 June, however, was answered with a simultaneous volley from all of the cannons on the walls of Azov (15:145). The Russian army was engaged in building an earthen ramp which moved steadily toward the walls of Azov. As many as 15,000 soldiers were occupied in this task continually (15:146). During the siege and bombardment Peter personally supervised the artillery and mining efforts. His sister wrote warning, "Don't go near the cannonballs and bullets." In a letter of reply he responded, "It is not I who go near the cannonballs and bullets, but they come near to me; send orders for them to stop it (8:80)." In early July a Russian prisoner escaped from Azov. He related the high level of turmoil within the city. On 9 July additional Austrian artillery experts arrived. They improved the sighting of several of the guns (8:90). By mid July the guns were sighted on the high earthen rampart and were firing down on the streets of Azov (15:146). On 19 July 2,000 Cossacks, who had grown tired of digging fortifications, made an uncommanded sortie against the walls. With a flourish of courage seen throughout Cossack history, the small force succeeded in entering the city. They were soon driven back to the wall, but were able to retain control of one tower on the wall. The following morning General Shein ordered a full frontal assault to support the trapped Cossacks. Just before this attack was launched, the Turks

raised a flag of surrender. The Cossacks immediately re-entered the city and sacked it. Efforts to restrain them were fruitless (15:146). The Azov Pasha surrendered for terms. Dutch traitor Jensen was returned to the Russians for subsequent humiliation and execution (15:146). The Pasha, his soldiers, and their families were allowed to leave the city. Turkish merchant ships evacuated the soldiers and families. Upon return to Turkey the defenders were placed under arrest. Three key officers were executed and the Pasha fled for his life (15:148).

Within a month the siege works were removed and the Azov walls were strengthened. Ten divisions were positioned in the city of Azov.

Peter sailed his galley along the north shore of the Sea of Azov looking for a suitable harbor for his new fleet. He selected Taganrog, 30 miles from the mouth of the Don. A few Austrian engineers were positioned in Azov and tasked to further improve the defensive fortifications. The remainder of the army returned to Moscow by land for a victor's welcome. Peter was hailed by his people for the first Russian military victory in 60 years. Many more would follow! Vinus, minister of internal affairs, commented on the Azov victory in a letter to Peter, saying, "Everyone knows that it was by your plan alone and by the aid you got from the sea that such a noted town has bowed down to your feet (15:147)." In 1700 the peace of Karlowitz ended the war between Turkey and Russia. Azov and Taganrog were formally ceded to Russia, but control of the Black Sea was retained by the Turks (17:3). Russia would not earn access to the Black Sea until 1774. In 1780 Admiral John Paul Jones (commissioned for a short time in the Imperial Russian Navy) commented:

*The commerce of the Black Sea is an object of great importance; but this commerce, so advantageous to Russia, will always be annoyed and often interrupted by the Turks, until Russia has a stronger fleet in the Black Sea to hold a rod over them, and to place the keys of Constantinople in the hands of the Empress (4:30).*

Complete control of the Black Sea finally came in 1829 after a superior Russian fleet defeated the Turks in the Battle of Navarino harbor. Control was officially ceded in the 1829 Treaty of Adrianople. The 1695 victory at Azov, however, was the cornerstone upon which these later victories were built (17:4).

#### Lessons Learned

*While it would be incorrect to draw too strong a conclusion from Peter's Azov campaign it is worth noting that from his first naval operation there seems to emerge the genesis of a basic concept that even today constitutes the salient doctrine concept of Soviet naval thinking: that a prime purpose of naval power is to protect the sea flank of land forces and assist those forces in taking the land objectives. That was precisely the manner in which Peter, the founder of the Russian Navy, used his naval force (9:27).*

There are two profound lessons Peter learned from his first combat experience: (1) the importance of a well trained, well disciplined, modern "westernized" army and (2) the importance of the naval arm to support Russian land combat.

To capitalize on the first lesson, Peter sent 61 noblemen from Russia to study in Italy, England, and Holland. There they learned western ideas, culture, and military sciences (20:73). He gathered land warfare engineers from all over Europe to train his officers in artillery and siege warfare. Within a few years Peter completely disbanded and executed or exiled the unreliable Streltsy. In their place he built professional regiments. The well trained, equipped, and disciplined troops served Russia effectively during the next three decades.



The application of the naval lessons learned was even more significant. Peter was convinced that the sea arm was essential in achieving Russia's destiny. Immediately after the Azov victory Peter dispatched 25,000 laborers to deepen the harbor at Taganrog and construct a suitable military harbor for a major fleet (15:149). He levied a shipbuilding quota on the wealthiest elements of Russian society. Each church diocese was tasked to build one ship for each 8,000 serf households in their jurisdiction. Civil landowners were required to finance the building of one ship for every 10,000 serfs. The merchants of Moscow were tasked to procure 12 ships. When they petitioned Peter to reduce the number he increased it to 14 (8:94). The new Black Sea fleet, when it was complete, consisted of 9 60-gun ships and 41 40-50-gun ships (1:314). Peter sent an initial cadre of Russian nobility abroad to be certified in shipbuilding and navigation. In the following years hundreds of other Russians were sent abroad to learn skills in these areas.

While Peter's new fleet did not engage the Turkish fleet again for a decade, its presence in the Sea of Azov was the most important factor in keeping the Sultan out of an alliance with the Swedes when Russia began the Swedish campaign. Peter soon shifted his shipbuilding drives to the Baltic, where the Swedes were threatening. In a few short years Peter built the city and harbor of Saint Petersburg. From there he launched a Baltic fleet which consisted of 48 ships of the line, 800 galleys, and employed over 28,000 men afloat (11:66). Such was the legacy of Azov.

## PART II

### PRINCIPLES OF WAR

#### INTRODUCTION

This part discusses the principles of war as defined by AFM 1-1. First, the principle is quoted. That is followed by a discussion of how the principle was applied and/or ignored during the Azov campaigns by the Turks and the Russians.

Though the Azov campaign was a land battle supported by naval forces it is a useful example for discussing the principles of war for Air Force application. The battle for Azov demonstrates excellent examples of both applied and ignored principles and the result of these actions. The most important principles that were applied at Azov were surprise, offensive, and logistics. These three are primary to victory in air doctrine. The technological innovation demonstrated by Tsar Peter provides a model for today's leaders. For Peter, as well as today's leaders, rapid modernization and innovation can often be the single most important factor in battle. Because the battle was principally one of siege warfare, some of the principles of war, such as maneuver, were not demonstrated.

Understanding these principles of war and learning to properly employ them is essential for victory. The following analysis should build understanding.

## OBJECTIVE

*The most basic principle for success in any military operation is a clear and concise statement of a realistic objective. The objective defines what the military action intends to accomplish and normally describes the nature and scope of an operation. An objective may vary from the overall objective of a broad military operation to the detailed objective of a specific attack. The ultimate military objective of war is to neutralize or destroy the enemy's armed forces and his will to fight. However, the intimate bond which ties war to politics cannot be ignored. War is a means to achieving a political objective and must never be considered apart from the political end. Consequently, political imperatives shape and define military objectives. It follows that the objective of each military operation must contribute to the overall political objective.*

### Russia

The Russian objectives were clearly stated and pursued. The objectives of the battle were closely tied to national objectives. Conquering Azov was a national objective for the Russians. The principal goal at Azov was to seize control of the fortress that controlled the mouth of the Don River, thus opening access to the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea. The military objectives were to contain the Tatar cavalry along the Dnieper River while Azov on the Don was destroyed by artillery and mines.

Collateral objectives included securing Cossack loyalty and ensuring that a peace treaty between Turkey and Russia would fulfill Russian objectives and interests.

While the military objectives of the 1695 campaign were derived from the political ones, they were not realistic. The number of soldiers

committed to the investure of the Azov fortress on the land side was inadequate. Consequently, the Turks were able to easily resupply the fortress. Additionally, no Russian plans were made in 1695 to control Azov's access to the sea. Therefore, the Turkish fleet had full access to the Don and the fortress. The only objective achieved in 1695 was that the Cossacks were assured of Moscow's interests in the defense of their homelands.

In 1696 the objectives were essentially the same. The second campaign, however, reflected more thorough planning and a realistic allotment of forces to the requirements of the battle. The troop strength doubled and river access to the city was controlled by Peter's newly built fleet. The ultimate military objective of eliminating the Turk's from Azov in 1696 was finally achieved through the correction of deficiencies which had been ignored in 1695.

#### Turkey

The Turkish objectives were to maintain the fortresses on the Dnieper and Don and eliminate the threat of Russian access to the Black Sea. Any Russian naval power on the Black Sea was viewed as a threat. Turkey also enjoyed a position of power in the "underbelly" of Russia by way of its river fortresses. These fortresses were used as basing facilities for attacks into the steppes. Azov was a vital point for Turkey to secure its strategic objectives against Russia. The limited military objective, therefore, was to repulse the Russian advance.

While Turkey appeared to be committed to the 1695 defense of Azov, it was totally unprepared for the 1696 campaign. When the new Russian fleet arrived in 1696, the Turks failed to commit a large enough force

of naval vessels to counter the threat. The ships were available, but were never sent to Azov. Consequently, the Turkish immediate and long-term objectives were jeopardized. Though the Turkish objective was clear, the commitment to it was not great enough to secure it.

#### OFFENSIVE

*Unless offensive action is initiated, military victory is seldom possible. The principle of offensive is to act rather than react. The offensive enables commanders to select priorities of attack, as well as the time, place, and weaponry necessary to achieve objectives. Aerospace forces possess a capability to seize the offensive and can be employed rapidly and directly against enemy targets. Aerospace forces have the power to penetrate to the heart of an enemy's strength without first defeating defending forces in detail. Therefore, to take full advantage of the capabilities of aerospace power, it is imperative that air commanders seize the offensive at the very outset of hostilities.*

#### Russia

The Russians chose the place and time to attack the Turks. Peter had been exercising his elite regiments for several years. Azov was to be their first test under fire. He prepared the offensive in the spring to allow ample time for an effective siege before winter halted military actions. Actually, Peter launched a twin offensive. Sheremetev was sent to the Dnieper to engage the Tatar cavalry and prevent it from supporting Azov. The second thrust was against Azov with heavy artillery and light infantry. Though the Russians began the offensive, it bogged down during the summer of 1695. The Turkish defenders were not shaken, rather their resolve increased. By fall, Peter saw the futility of further frontal attacks. He commanded a retreat to Moscow.

Russia again seized the offensive in the spring of 1696. This time, however, the first attack was made against the Turkish fleet. The

fortress was then sealed off on both the land and sea side. When the Turkish fleet counterattacked later in the campaign the Russian fleet again drove it away. In 1695 the Russians seized the offensive but lost the advantage through ineffective and inappropriate tactics. The next year Peter adjusted priorities for force employment and again seized the offensive. The artillery and siege engineering were improved. Additionally, the Russian fleet drove off the Turkish fleet and supply vessels.

#### Turkey

Though the Turks were forced to assume the defensive position, they showed their effective use of offensive on three occasions: (1) During both the 1695 and 1696 campaigns the Turks made sorties out of their fortress to destroy Russian siege works, soldiers, and artillery. These sorties continued to harass and delay siege engineering and accounted for the greatest percentage of Russian casualties. (2) During the 1695 campaign the Turks made several attacks on the Russian logistics lines. Before the chains blocking the river mouth were destroyed by the Russians, Russian supplies were brought down the Don River and were carried overland the final few miles to the Russian lines. This part of the logistics line was consistently cut during the early months of the 1695 campaign. (3) The most effective attack launched by the Turks was against the retreating Russian army in 1695. The Russian army was beaten and without effective logistics lines. The Turkish cavalry surged forward to harass the withdrawing army, destroying an entire regiment as well as portions of others. The Turks were so confident of the effectiveness and destructiveness of their efforts that they made no additional provisions to defend Azov during the winter of 1696.

## SURPRISE

*Surprise is the attack of an enemy at a time, place, and manner for which the enemy is neither prepared nor expecting an attack. The principle of surprise is achieved when an enemy is unable to react effectively to an attack. Surprise is achieved through security, deception, audacity, originality, and timely execution. Surprise can decisively shift the balance of power. Surprise gives attacking forces the advantage of seizing the initiative while forcing the enemy to react. When other factors influencing the conduct of war are unfavorable, surprise may be the key element in achieving the objective. The execution of surprise attacks can often reverse the military situation, generate opportunities for air and surface forces to seize the offensive, and disrupt the cohesion and fighting effectiveness of enemy forces. Surprise is a most powerful influence in aerospace operations, and commanders must make every effort to attain it. Surprise requires a commander to have adequate command, control, and communications to direct his forces, accurate intelligence information to exploit enemy weaknesses, effective deception to divert enemy attention, and sufficient security to deny an enemy sufficient warning and reaction to a surprise attack.*

### Russia

There were no Russian examples of surprise in the 1695 campaign. The following year, however, was completely different. The Russian force effectively employed surprise on at least three separate occasions. First, they re-attacked Azov with only a few months of recuperation. The Turkish defenders did not expect the immediate return of the Russians and had not removed the Russian siege walls built the previous year. The surprise was heightened by the fact that the Russians had constructed a fleet of over 1,000 river vessels as well as over 20 seagoing combat ships. This feat caught the Turks completely off guard and unprepared to combat the Russians at sea.

The other two Russian uses of surprise were attacks conducted by the Cossacks. While the small Turkish fleet sat anchored at the mouth of the Don, the Cossacks floated in among the ships in small rowboats on

the night of 29 May. Under cover of darkness they boarded and captured ten ships. The remainder of the fleet fled to the Sea of Azov fearing a full assault by the Russian fleet. This night surprise attack sent the Turkish combat and merchant ships into the Sea of Azov, never to return to supply the fortress.

The last surprise attack was two days before the Turkish surrender. On the evening of 19 July the Cossacks, without orders from General Shein, launched a frontal attack against the Azov walls. They had grown tired of digging siege works with the other soldiers and launched their own attack--to the great surprise of both sides! Their attack breached the walls and led to the final surrender.

#### Turkey

The Turkish defenders at Azov had few opportunities to exercise the principle of surprise. They did, however, launch one very effective surprise attack. In the 1695 campaign, the Dutch engineer, Jacob Jensen, defected to the Turks. He related to them the Russian battle plan as well as the weak points in the siege walls. He also told the Turks about the Russian practice of napping after the midday meal. The next day the Turks attacked the Russian lines, after the midday meal, while most of the soldiers were sleeping. A 3-hour battle raged. When it ended there were 400 Russians dead and 600 wounded. Additionally, many of the siege works were destroyed. This surprise attack broke the will of the Russians and secured the Turkish victory in 1695.



## SECURITY

*Security protects friendly military operations from enemy activities which could hamper or defeat aerospace forces. Security is taking continuous, positive measures to prevent surprise and preserve freedom of action. Security involves active and passive defensive measures and the denial of useful information to an enemy. To deny an enemy knowledge of friendly capabilities and actions requires a concerted effort in both peace and war. Security protects friendly forces. In conducting these actions, air commanders at all levels are ultimately responsible for the security of their forces. Security of aerospace operations is achieved through a combination of factors such as secrecy, disguise, operational security, deception, dispersal, maneuver, timing, posturing, and the defense and hardening of forces. Security is enhanced by establishing an effective command, control, communications, and intelligence network. Intelligence efforts minimize the potential for enemy actions to achieve surprise or maintain an initiative, and effective command, control, and communications permit friendly forces to exploit enemy weaknesses and respond to enemy actions.*

### Russia

The best examples of security in the Azov campaigns were losses of security. Twice in 1696 Turkish security was breached which yielded significant gains for the Russians. The first breach came on 10 June 1696 when a Turkish prisoner revealed that a resupply force was approaching Azov from the Black Sea. This advanced warning allowed Peter to alert his fleet and position them to prevent the resupply. When the Turks arrived, they turned and fled seeing their numerical inferiority. In July a Russian prisoner escaped from his Turkish captors in Azov. He told of the deprivations within the walls of Azov and of the low morale. This timely intelligence prompted the final thrusts against the city and its defeat. In both cases, the loss of security through information given by prisoners proved to be of great value. The loss of security is hard to measure in terms of cost to the Turks; it jeopardized their only

hope of supply and built confidence in the Russians to make their final attacks.

#### Turkey

The most notable and costly breach of security for the Russians was the defection of Dutch engineer Jacob Jensen. He was a trusted confidante of Peter and therefore had complete knowledge of current battle plans as well as the status of all siege works. This information in the hands of the Turks cost the Russians 1,000 casualties (deaths and injuries). Peter did not consider defection of Europeans to the "infidel" Moslem forces a possibility. Consequently, he made no provision to prevent such defections or limit access to important battle information. The cost was high.

#### MASS/ECONOMY OF FORCE

*Success in achieving objectives with aerospace power requires a proper balance between the principles of mass and economy of force. Concentrated firepower can overwhelm enemy defenses and secure an objective at the right time and place. Because of their characteristics and capabilities, aerospace forces possess the ability to concentrate enormous decisive striking power upon selected targets when and where it is needed most. The impact of these attacks can break the enemy's defenses, disrupt his plan of attack, destroy the cohesion of his forces, produce the psychological shock that may thwart a critical enemy thrust, or create an opportunity for friendly forces to seize the offensive. Concurrently, using economy of force permits a commander to execute attacks with appropriate mass at the critical time and place without wasting resources on secondary objectives. War will always involve the determination of priorities. The difficulty in determining these priorities is directly proportional to the capabilities and actions of the enemy and the combat environment. Commanders at all levels must determine and continually refine priorities among competing demands for limited aerospace assets. This requires a balance between mass and economy of force, but the paramount considerations for commanders must always be the objective. Expending excessive efforts on secondary objectives would tend to*

*dissipate the strength of aerospace forces and possibly render them incapable of achieving the primary objective. Economy of force helps to preserve the strength of aerospace forces and retain the capability to employ decisive firepower when and where it is needed most.*

#### Russia

Peter demonstrated adequate application of this principle with one exception. The 1695 Dnieper diversionary force given to Sheremetev numbered 120,000 soldiers. Peter's force consisted of 31,000. While this force was twice that of the Turks in Azov, it proved to be insufficient to completely envelop the city. It was also too small to take the city by frontal assault. In the second campaign (1696) Peter adjusted the troop strengths to provide greater mass to the Azov force. Sheremetev was sent to the Dnieper with only 75,000 in the diversionary force. Peter increased the land forces attacking Azov to 75,000. In addition, these forces were supported by the new fleet. It must be remembered that the 1695 campaign against Azov was Peter's first battle. An attacking force double that of the defending force probably seemed adequate. He applied the lessons from the 1695 defeat, though, to ensure adequate force was available in 1696.

Besides the one mistake noted above, Peter demonstrated accurate application of mass and economy of force. He attacked the upstream towers one at a time with the full force of his army. This made them easy targets. He also saw the need for overwhelming naval strength, not just a few gun boats, to control the seaward access. His fleet, though employed very little, was effective primarily because it greatly outnumbered Turkish warships in the area.

## Turkey

Though there was not a great opportunity for the Turks to demonstrate effective large scale massing of troops, they did show excellent comprehension of small scale mass and economy of force. Their counter-attack sorties against Russian lines were effective because they committed a larger number of Turkish soldiers against weak points in the siege walls. Their sorties resembled modern guerrilla concepts of attacking only when the attacker has clear numerical superiority. For the Turks this tactic ensured minimum loss of lives, thus preserving the integrity of the small defending force.

## MANEUVER

*War is a complex interaction of moves and countermoves. Maneuver is the movement of friendly forces in relation to enemy forces. Commanders seek to maneuver their strengths selectively against an enemy's weakness while avoiding engagements with forces of superior strength. Effective use of maneuver can maintain the initiative, dictate the terms of engagement, retain security, and position forces at the right time and place to execute surprise attacks. Maneuver permits rapid massing of combat power and effective disengagement of forces. While maneuver is essential, it is not without risk. Moving large forces may lead to loss of cohesion and control.*

## Russia

Effective maneuver was not a salient characteristic of the siege warfare employed against Azov. However, there were isolated instances that were noteworthy. In both 1695 and 1696 Peter transported the largest group of his forces by river to Azov. This allowed the forces to arrive at the battle rested and ready for combat. Though Peter squandered this advantage in 1695 through the extended and ineffective

siege, he capitalized on it in 1696. He tasked the ready forces to a high level of siege work construction and bombardment.

Peter's use of his fleet was also noteworthy. The fleet never engaged the Turkish fleet in combat. The surprise and small numerical superiority were the main contribution of the fleet. However, Peter directed the fleet to take easily observable positions to threaten any Turkish naval counterattack.

Finally, the cavalry of both Sheremetev on the Dnieper and the Don Cossacks at Azov demonstrated the classic mobility associated with light cavalry. Their rapid maneuver and surprise attacks were primary contributions to the victories at Azov as well as those achieved by Sheremetev along the Dnieper.

#### Turkey

The Turks were afforded little opportunity to demonstrate effective maneuver since they were defending a fixed position. The single notable example of effective maneuver was their attack on the rear guard of the retreating Russian forces in the fall of 1695. The Turks massed small groups of fast cavalry against pockets of rear guard infantry. Their success in this endeavor was predictable.

Effective maneuver with the Turkish ships in 1696 might have led to Turkish victory. The number of Russian and Turkish warships at the mouth of the Don was nearly equal. Additionally, the Turkish crews were more experienced in navigation and warfare. Their fleet could have been used effectively against the Russian fleet. However, the mere presence of a large Russian fleet (built in six months!) had such a shock value, the Turks fled without employing this arm of their defense.

## TIMING AND TEMPO

*Timing and tempo is the principle of executing military operations at a point in time and at a rate which optimizes the use of friendly forces and which inhibits or denies the effectiveness of enemy forces. The purpose is to dominate the action, to remain unpredictable, and to create uncertainty in the mind of the enemy. Commanders seek to influence the timing and tempo of military actions by seizing the initiative and operating beyond the enemy's ability to react effectively. Controlling the action may require a mix of surprise, security, mass, and maneuver to take advantage of emerging and fleeting opportunities. Consequently, attacks against an enemy must be executed at a time, frequency, and intensity that will do the most to achieve objectives. Timing and tempo require that commanders have an intelligence structure that can identify opportunities and a command, control, and communications network that can responsively direct combat power to take advantage of those opportunities.*

### Russia

The timing of this battle was controlled primarily by the weather (time of year). Peter knew he must deploy his forces in early spring, seize Azov, and return to Moscow before winter. The plan went well with regard to deployment and employment. However, the failure to cut off the Turkish supply lines meant the tempo for the attack had to be faster than Turkish resupply could handle. Unfortunately, the long Russian lines of supply prevented a faster rate of cannon fire or offensive operations. As the summer of 1695 drew to a close, Peter ordered two direct infantry attacks against the advice of his generals. He felt he must accelerate the pace of the battle to gain the victory before winter. This was a classic example of inability to sustain the offensive at a rate that would bring a victory within an acceptable time.

Peter learned from this bad experience, however. With the supporting naval fleet and additional ground forces, Peter was able to intensify

the conflict the next year. In the final days of the 1696 campaign, he also relocated artillery pieces under the direction of European experts. These actions allowed Peter to step up the pace of the attack. The surrender in July allowed the Russians to occupy the fortress, remove the siege works, and return to Moscow before winter.

#### Turkey

The Turks never were in control of the battle. As defenders of the besieged fortress they responded to the pace set by the Russians. The one effectively timed counterattack was described under SURPRISE.

#### UNITY OF COMMAND

*Unity of command is the principle of vesting appropriate authority and responsibility in a single commander to effect unity of effort in carrying out an assigned task. Unity of command provides for the effective exercise of leadership and power of decision over assigned forces for the purpose of achieving a common objective. Unity of command obtains unity of effort by the coordinated action of all forces toward a common goal. While coordination may be attained by cooperation, it is best achieved by giving a single commander full authority.*

#### Russia

This was the greatest weakness in the 1695 campaign. Peter did not wish to assume supreme command. Neither did he desire to elevate one of his three generals above the others. Lefort was the closest friend of Peter, but his lack of field experience made him a poor choice. The Scot, General Gordon, was the best field marshal in the Russian army. However, he was Catholic, which prejudiced the army against appointing him as supreme commander. Peter did not consider the Russian General Golovin a good candidate either. Consequently, all battle plans were

made by counsel of the three generals, who also considered Peter's proposals. This arrangement was a complete failure. The three generals rarely agreed. Besides the lack of sea control in 1695, this failure to establish unity of command was the most important cause for defeat.

This error also was corrected before the 1696 campaign. Lefort was placed in charge of the navy. Gordon was appointed as quartermaster general for the entire operation. Peter removed himself from the role of decision maker and appointed Russian General Shein as supreme commander of all land and sea forces. The results of this arrangement were positive. The Russian soldiers were content to follow General Gordon's commands, knowing that the Russian general Shein was in supreme command. General Shein proved to be a strong leader and directed the 1696 battle with a great measure of effectiveness.

#### Turkey

The Turkish defenders were experienced in warfare and showed exemplary discipline and unity of command under the Azov Pasha. The Turks showed exceptional calm, even until the final days of battle, in spite of adverse conditions. Their military discipline and response to authority were reflective of the Turkish professional army.

#### SIMPLICITY

*To achieve a unity of effort toward a common goal, guidance must be quick, clear and concise--it must have simplicity. Simplicity promotes understanding, reduces confusion, and permits ease of execution in the intense and uncertain environment of combat. Simplicity adds to the cohesion of a force by providing unambiguous guidance that fosters a clear understanding of expected actions. Simplicity is an important ingredient in achieving victory, and it must pervade all levels of a military operation. Extensive and meticulous preparation in peacetime enhances the simplicity of an*



*operation during the confusion and friction of wartime. Command structures, strategies, plans, tactics, and procedures must all be clear, simple, and unencumbered to permit ease of execution. Commanders at all levels must strive to establish simplicity in these areas, and the peacetime exercise of forces must strive to meet that same goal.*

#### Russia/Turkey

There were no clear examples of this principle demonstrated by either of the combatants. Siege warfare was extremely complex and multifaceted. Both the 1695 and 1696 campaigns employed regulars, mercenary Europeans, Russians, Cossacks, elite Regiments, and the Moscow guard in many different modes. The lesson to be learned from this battle is that war is a complex and confused arena. That confusion should not be multiplied by employing diverse kinds of combatants under ineffective command. It is a sure recipe for failure. While the same diversity of combat units existed in 1696, Peter put them under a supreme commander and relied principally on his own elite regiments and marines. He used the unreliable Streltsy and the untrained peasant army in digging and moving dirt. This arrangement somewhat simplified the complex force.

#### LOGISTICS

*Logistics is the principle of sustaining both man and machine in combat. Logistics is the principle of obtaining, moving, and maintaining warfighting potential. Success in warfare depends on getting sufficient men and machines in the right position at the right time. This requires a simple, secure, and flexible logistics system to be an integral part of an air operation. Regardless of the scope and nature of a military operation, logistics is one principle that must always be given attention. Logistics can limit the extent of an operation or permit the attainment of objectives. In sustained air warfare, logistics may require the constant attention of an air commander. This can impose a competing and training demand on the time and energy of a commander,*

*particularly when that commander may be immersed in making critical operational decisions. This competing demand will also impose a heavy burden on a command, control, and communications network. The information, mechanics, and decisions required to get men, machines, and their required materiel where and when they are needed is extensive and demanding. During intense combat, these logistics decisions may even tend to saturate the time and attention of a commander. To reduce the stresses imposed by potentially critical logistics decisions, commanders must establish a simple and secure logistic system in peacetime that can reduce the burden of constant attention in wartime.*

### Russia

The principle of Logistics is the clearest one demonstrated in the Azov campaigns. The Tsar learned from his errors one year and remodeled his logistics the next year. The Russians showed little forethought concerning the importance of logistics in 1695. While there was a small supply of food arriving in barges on the Don, Peter expected the soldiers to forage for food. He also felt that Azov would fall quickly and the city's stocks would be available. This was the thinking of a "green" commander. The Russian logistics problem was compounded by insecure lines of transportation. While the Turks held the two towers on the river above Azov, the Russian supplies were unloaded upstream from the towers and carried overland to the army. Since Azov was positioned between the supply arrival point and the army, a small cavalry force from the city was able to continually seize supplies moving overland.

The final logistics tragedy was the 1695 retreat. Peter waited too late in the year to begin the retreat from Azov. He needed the grass on the steppes to feed the animals. By the time the Russians reached the steppes, the grass was dead. There was also little food available for

the soldiers. Starvation and disease killed as many soldiers in the retreat as the Turks.

### Turkey

Azov could not be defeated as long as it could be supplied. The Turks were able to resupply the city throughout the 1695 campaign. In retrospect it was futile for Peter's forces to stay on the battlefield in 1695. Victory for the Russians was impossible. The Turks, unhindered at sea, delivered fresh troops, ammunition, powder, and food to the Azov defenders. The Russian force did not even cut off the land side of Azov completely. The 1696 campaign was different. Peter saw the futility of siege warfare against a fully supplied opponent. The Russians immediately cut both land and sea lines of communication. The Turks understood the threat of complete investiture. On 14 June they attempted a seaborne counterattack on the two small forts Peter had established at the mouth of the Don. This site was necessary to land supplies and reinforcements. The attack, however, was repulsed and the Turkish ships fled upon sighting the Russian fleet. Once the logistic line was cut, the fate of Azov was sealed.

### COHESION

*Cohesion is the principle of establishing and maintaining the warfighting spirit and capability of a force to win. Cohesion is the cement that holds a unit together through the trials of combat and is critical to the fighting effectiveness of a force. Throughout military experience, cohesive forces have generally achieved victory, while disjointed efforts have usually met defeat. Cohesion depends directly on the spirit a leader inspires in his people, the shared experiences of a force in training or combat, and the sustained operational capability of a force. Commanders build cohesion through effective leadership and generating a sense of common identity and*

*shared purpose. Leaders maintain cohesion by communicating objectives clearly, demonstrating genuine concern for the morale and welfare of their people, and employing men and machines according to the dictates of sound military doctrine. Cohesion in a force is produced over time through effective leadership at all levels of command.*

Russia (Turkey--no clear examples)

There was little cohesion of forces in either of the two campaigns. The Streltsy were particularly divisive. They were not completely loyal to the Tsar. Their highest loyalty was to their own officers. They disliked duty outside Moscow and later in Peter's reign even plotted to assassinate him. Peter was ruthless in suppressing this rebellion, remembering the many failings of the Streltsy, including those at Azov.

The Cossacks also were never fully controlled by Peter's generals. They were an asset because of their ingenuity and fierce fighting ability. They were also a liability, because they never completely submitted control of their units to the supreme commander. The attacks against the Turkish fleet at night and the final assault against Azov were major turning points, yet both attacks were uncommanded efforts on the part of the Cossacks. One can only imagine the confusion the Cossack presence made in any campaign. Even the allied commander was unsure what the Cossacks would do.

The lack of a supreme commander in 1695 also contributed to a lack of cohesion among Peter's army. After Azov, Peter either appointed one supreme commander or held the position himself. He also relied heavily on professionally trained regiments. He saw the difference at Azov in the capabilities and loyalties of professional regiments compared with peasant recruits.

#### SUMMARY

The contrasts of the 1695 and 1696 Azov campaigns provide good examples of the principles of war first ignored, then applied. Peter's naval arm turned the tide in 1696. He would rely on it heavily in the future. He learned the value of effective logistics as well as denying enemy resupply. He also learned that numerical superiority is no substitute for disciplined and well-led forces with effective, professional, unified command. Peter survived his first loss and applied the lessons learned in the next campaign. Few military leaders can afford losses for learning. It is possible and necessary for us to learn and apply other's lessons from history.

### PART III

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

##### 1. Lead-Off Question

What were the major differences between the battles of 1695 and 1696 that reversed the outcome?

##### Discussion

There are few instances in history where a battle has been fought in two successive years by the same combatants on the same battlefield. Azov is one of these rare occurrences. The comparison of the two battles yields clear insight into the results of application and misapplication of the principles of war. Possible differences for discussion include Unity of Command (lacking in 1695), Logistics (availability of Turkish resupply in a siege scenario), Mass and Security.

##### a. Follow-up Question

How was logistics related to the timing and tempo of the battles?

##### Discussion

In 1695 the Russians intended to defeat the Turks by investiture of the city and bombardment. Inadequate force strength prevented total enclosure of the city. Therefore, the potential to defeat the Turks was reduced seriously. In 1696 the naval blockade achieved the desired total investiture and ultimately the victory.

b. Follow-up Question

What were the differences in the Russian chain of command structure in 1695 and 1696? What effect did this have on the battlefield?

Discussion

The three leader army, meeting in council, proved ineffective. Generally, Lefort and Golovin sided against Gordon. Tsar Peter usually agreed with the two generals against the one. The appointment of a supreme commander in 1696 made decision making more efficient. It also allowed Gordon's ideas to be implemented even when he was a minority opinion.

2. Lead-Off Question

How important was the naval force to the outcome of the battles?

Discussion

In 1695 the Turks were able to protect their resupply lines using their Black Sea fleet. Consequently they were able to provide the necessary supplies to Azov. In 1696 the Russian fleet controlled the Sea of Azov and the Don River. This fleet protected the Russian resupply via the Don River, and it cut the vital Turkish supply link to the army inside the fortress at Azov. Even though the two fleets never engaged each other in a full-scale battle, they were the principal deciding factors in the battles.

a. Follow-up Question

What was the effect of producing and deploying the Russian fleet in five months time?

Discussion

This action was a total surprise to the Turks. They had made no provisions to prevent the Russians from deploying a fleet from up-river.

Once the fleet was in place at the mouth of the Don, it would have required a very large Turkish fleet to displace them.

b. Follow-up Question

Is there any similarity between the deployment of this first Russian fleet and current Soviet naval growth?

Discussion

Current rapid production of both surface and undersurface ships has provided the Soviet Union with the means to project power globally. While Russian land forces have not been used much outside of Russia, the naval power makes that potential much greater.

3. Lead-off Question

How did surprise affect the outcome of the battles?

Discussion

The Cossack attacks were instrumental in defeating the Turks. They initially frightened off the Turkish fleet and they made the initial breach in the Turkish land defenses. Their unconventional and well-timed attacks surprised the Russian command as well as the Turks.

a. Follow-up Question

How did the Russian return to Azov in 1696 constitute a surprise?

Discussion

The Turks did not believe the Russians could mount a successful attack after the terrible defeat in 1695. Consequently, they made no effort to remove the Russian siege fortifications or win back the towers on the river. This failure gave the Russian forces an advantage of starting with the same positions they had finished with the previous year.



b. Follow-up Question

Why was the "nap time" Turkish counterattack so effective (1695)?

Discussion

The Turks attacked at a known vulnerable time in the day of a Russian soldier. By attacking at that time the Turks multiplied the effectiveness and destruction of their sortie.

4. Lead-off Question

How did loss of security affect the battles?

Discussion

Information received from prisoners and the traitor Jensen allowed the two forces to do things that would not have been possible. The Russians, by learning of the advancing Turkish fleet, positioned their own fleet to prevent resupply of the fort. The Turks used Jensen's information to prepare their counterattack.

a. Follow-up Question

Often security receives little attention before a battle or war. Afterward, it can be seen that loss of security is extremely costly. Why does security take a "back seat" in planning a battle?

Discussion

It is hard to tell where the leaks of information will develop. The leaks are more damaging when they come from those who have greater access to information. Often the high level officials are overlooked as potential leaks.

5. Lead-Off Question

Why was victory at Azov important to the Russians?

### Discussion

- 1) It gave them control over the Don and Dnieper Rivers; as a consequence they gained access to the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea.
- 2) It gave the Russians a major victory over the Turks and ensured Russian interest would be considered in the final treaty with Turkey.
- 3) It gave prestige to Russia in the eyes of other Europeans.

#### a. Follow-up Question

Why was the victory important to Tsar Peter?

### Discussion

- 1) It established him as an effective military leader in the eyes of the Russians and Europeans.
- 2) It proved to Peter the effectiveness of western military technique, e.g., professional regiments, scientific artillery, and siege warfare.
- 3) It solidified Peter's belief concerning the importance of Russian naval power.

#### 6. Other Areas for Discussion

a. These battles had to be fought in the spring and ended in the fall because of weather considerations. To what extent does weather affect modern warfare plans?

b. Why did Peter and his staff make so many mistakes in preparing for the 1695 battle? (No planned logistics support, split command, etc.) Possible answers might include: Peter's inexperience, General staff fear of contradicting the Tsar, underestimation of the Azov defense forces, failure to comprehend the geography of the battlefield.

c. What should the role of special forces (Cossack cavalry) be in a battle? Should they be given some measure of autonomy to capitalize

on their special capabilities? Do commanders of conventional forces overlook potential abilities of special forces?

d. Though the Russian fleet turned the battle to a victory in 1696, it was expensive in terms of lives and money. Were there any less costly alternatives available to Russia to win a victory at Azov in 1696?

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## APPENDICES

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APPENDIX A--CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS SURROUNDING THE BATTLE OF AZOV

APPENDIX B--(MAP) RUSSIAN DEPLOYMENT ROUTES

APPENDIX C--(MAP) GENERAL FEATURES OF AZOV AREA

APPENDIX D--PROJECT TASKING LETTER

## APPENDIX A

### CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS SURROUNDING THE BATTLE OF AZOV

- 1677- First Russian War with Turkey;  
1681
- 1681 Treaty of Radzin--Russia given trading rights on Black Sea
- 1686 Russia joins Alliance with Poland and Austria against Turkey
- 1687 Basil Golitsyn defeated by Tatars in Crimea (General Gordon was quartermaster general on this campaign)
- 1695 21 February--First council of war in Moscow to plan Azov campaign  
Early March--Gordon departs overland for Azov  
27 March--Gordon arrives at Azov, begins siege works  
May--Lefort and Golovin traveling by water leave Moscow with Peter  
Early June--Azov encircled on three sides  
29 June--Peter arrives at Azov with 21,000 soldiers and with Lefort and Golovin (via river)  
6 July--final fortress on Dnieper falls to Sheremetev  
7 July--Cannon begin firing (continue 14 weeks)  
15 July--Entire Russian army assembled at Azov  
20 July--Cossacks capture first watchtower  
20 July--Turkish galleys begin resupply of Azov  
July--Jacob Jensen defects; compromises Russian plans  
Next day--Turks attack; heavy Russian losses  
Early August--Second watchtower capitulates to Russians  
15 August--first frontal assault on walls of Azov; 1,500 Russians killed  
19 August--Word received at Azov of Sheremetev's victories on Dnieper  
25 September--Second frontal assault on walls of Azov  
27 September--Retreat toward Moscow begun  
12 October--Final troops leave Azov  
2 December--Russian troops arrive in Moscow

1696 29 January--Ivan dies; Peter becomes sole Tsar in Russia  
 January-May--Voronezh shipbuilding conducted with 28,000 conscripted laborers and European experts  
 23 April--General Gordon sails with 123 barges from Voronezh  
 25 April--General Golovin sails with his force from Voronezh  
 End April--Sheremetev leads 70,000 troops to attack Dnieper and Tatar cavalry  
 3 May--Peter departs Voronezh with his flag ship Principium and one squadron of 8 galleys  
 10, 17, 24 May--One squadron of galleys departs each week for Azov  
 28 May--Cossack Reconnaissance at river mouth discovers two Turkish war ships  
 29 May--Peter dispatches 9 Russian galleys to below Azov to drive off Turkish ships; 40 ships discovered instead of 2  
 Evening, 29 May--Cossacks attack Turkish ships at night using small riverboats; Turkish ships weigh anchor and flee to open water  
 2 June--Entire Russian force of galleys (29) move to mouth of Don; seal off river and Azov  
 10 June--Captured Turkish soldiers reveal Turkish re-inforcing fleet is heading toward Azov  
 11 June--Entire Russian fleet is in place at mouth of Don River  
 14 June--Turkish fleet sighted at opening of Don to Sea of Azov; Turkish troop landing repulsed by Russian fleet  
 20 June--Russians call for Turkish surrender; refused; cannon bombardment begins  
 28 June--Second Turkish troop landing repulsed  
 End June--Azov encircled by Russian army and artillery  
 9 July--Austrian engineers and artillery experts arrive; relocate guns for more effective bombardment  
 18 July--Russian council of war sets 22 July as date for frontal assault on walls  
 19 July--Cossacks attack Azov walls; breach defenses  
 20 July--Azov surrenders  
 10 October--Army returns to Moscow; triumphal entry  
 22 November--61 Russian noblemen sent abroad to learn shipbuilding and navigation

1696- Troops with their families transferred to Azov and Taganrog to  
 1697 inhabit those port cities



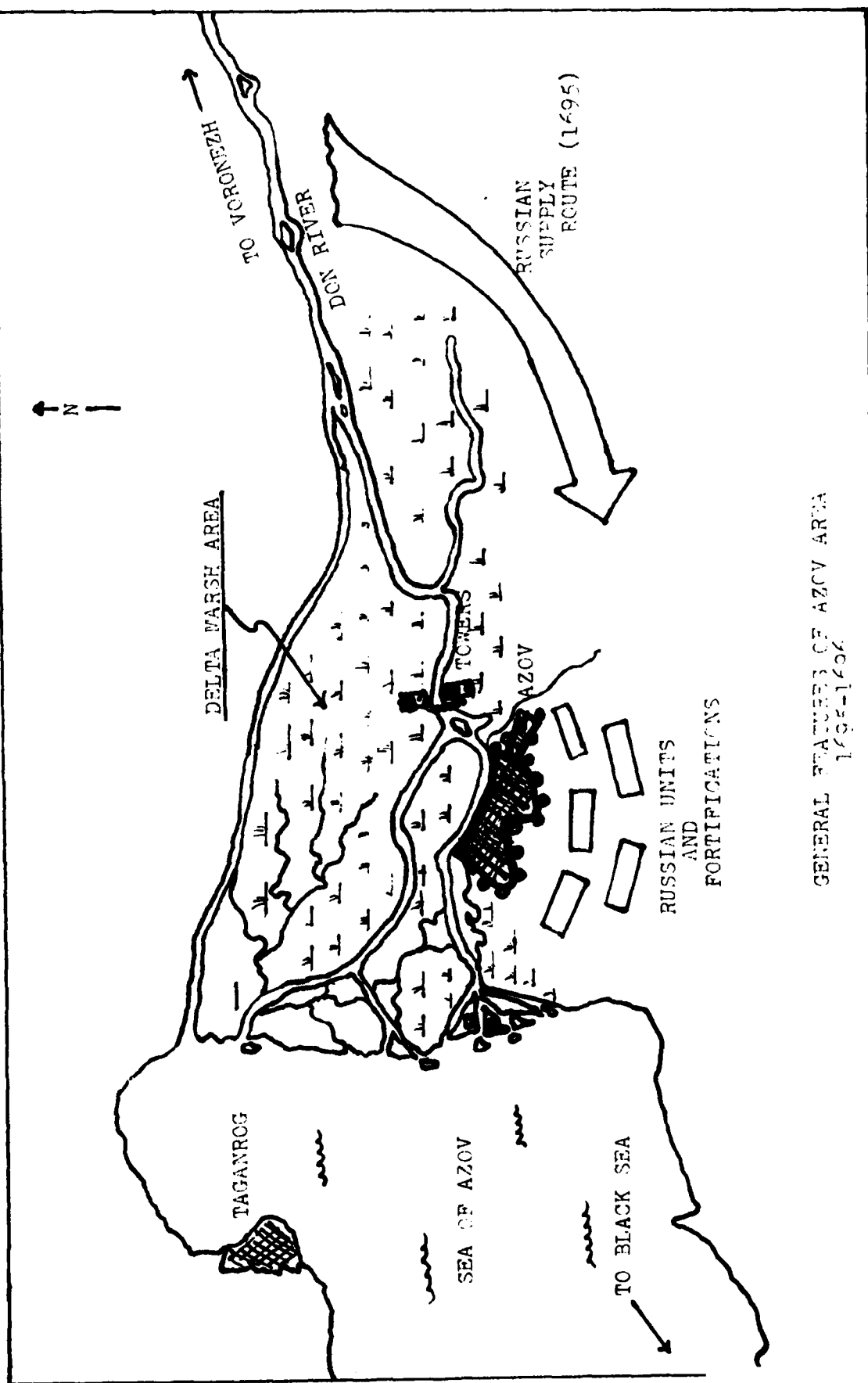
- 1699-    Peace of Karlowitz--Russia gives up rights to Black Sea fleet  
1700
- 1711    Russian fleet destroyed by Turks
- 1711    July--Turks surround Peter's army at Pruth; peace settlement cedes  
         Azov to Turks with port of Taganrog
- 1736-    War against Turkey  
1739
- 1739    Treaty of Belgrade--Azov returned to Russia; no Russian ships  
         allowed on Sea of Azov or Black Sea, however
- 1774    Battle of Kuchuk Kainarjo--Russia defeats Turkish fleet; Taganrog  
         restored to Russian control; Russia wins fleet access  
         to Black Sea and Dardanelles
- 1827-    War with Turkey; Russian flag ship "Azov" leads fleet to totally  
1829    destroy Turkish fleet at Navarino harbor
- 1829    Treaty of Adrianople; Russians win full freedom of Black Sea and  
         coastlands

(APPENDIX B)



(APPENDIX C)

This map drawn by the author. It was developed using a current Russian topographical map with battle features depicted in approximate positions as described by research resources.



GENERAL FEATURES OF AZOV AREA  
1895-1906

(APPENDIX D)

FROM: EDCJ

14 September 1983

SUBJECT: Historical Battle Analysis

TO: Course Officers and Advisors

1. The purpose of this letter is to provide guidance for standardizing the format of this year's battle analyses. Each analysis will have three major sections, and each section should be capable of standing alone.
2. Section One should describe the selected battle and should be no more than 15 double-spaced pages in length. At a minimum, this section should cover the players, dates, location, and general outcome of the battle. Visual depictions (maps, charts, or sketches) of key engagements are desirable but not mandatory (see Atch 1 for an example).
3. Section Two should analyze how the AFM 1-1 principles of war (see Atch 2 for draft copy of new AFM 1-1) were applied or violated by each side (see Atch 3 for sample treatment). This section should be less than 20 double-spaced pages in length.
4. Section Three should consist of discussion questions in a guided discussion format (see Atch 4).
5. Advisors should attach a copy of this letter to the completed SPS package to insure that the first reader is aware of the nonstandard format and special requirements of the project.

*Duck*

JOHN W. DOROUGH, JR., Major, USAF  
Chief, Warfare Simulations Branch  
Warfare Studies Division

4 Atch

1. Sample sketches
2. Draft AFM 1-1
3. Sample principle of war treatments
4. Sample discussion questions